

# Live Civil War shell found at Fort Morgan

Last summer, maintenance workers at Fort Morgan discovered a 100-pound parrot shell inside the brick fort’s roof during excavations. Fortunately, it posed no threat to the workers, but it certainly was a surprise to everyone at the site.

Mike Bailey, an Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) historian at Fort Morgan, thinks that the shell was fired at the fort during the Civil War Battle of Mobile Bay. Based on the likely trajectory, he has narrowed it down to having been fired from one of three ships.

“This shell was fired in combat and was lodged in the protective layer of sand above the casemates,” stated Blanton Blankenship, director of the fort.

Artillery expert Steve Phillips removed the shell and disarmed it. It was later returned to the fort as part of the museum’s collection.

The workers who found the shell were removing the upper layers of the fort’s roof to see why water was not being directed to the downspouts. The project is part of a \$500,000 federal grant to determine why the roof doesn’t function well and why cracks in the brick casemates were getting larger.

AHC Executive Director Frank White said, “Since the brick fort was constructed in 1834, the roof has not been functioning

adequately, and the cracks in the casemates have been increasing in recent years.”

White added, “The AHC adopted a master plan for the fort in 2005 that identified both of these areas as priorities. The plan recommended that the cracks be stabilized and that assessments should be done to determine the cause of the drainage problems. We are beginning to implement parts of the master plan with this project, and will be continuing to fulfill recommendations of the plan in the future.”

The AHC contracted with Stella-Architects for Historic Structures, an Atlanta firm with extensive experience restoring historic brick forts. Mary Catherine Martin, principal architect for the project, is recommending that the AHC stabilize the cracks with titanium pins.

She also is recommending designing and constructing a new drainage system to direct water away from the fort’s interior and into new downspouts. This will require the construction of a new secondary roof system to complement the existing roof.

The project is currently in the preliminary design phase and should be finished by spring 2010.



Workers removing a layer of sand above Fort Morgan’s brick arches found an unexploded artillery shell.



The exposed brick casement roof, with its protective sand layer removed, let workers investigate the malfunctioning brick drains.

# Civil Rights Trail named a top world travel destination



The Selma to Montgomery Civil Rights Trail is one of **Frommer’s Top 12 Destinations in the World for 2009**. Only two other destinations in the United States were included on the list published in the Dec.-Jan. issue of the international travel guide: Washington, D.C. and Lassen Volcanic National Park, California.

The Trail was also part of a special report **CNBC** did on the top destinations list. The 1965 Voting Rights March took place along this 54-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 80, set in rolling Black Belt prairie landscapes. The march helped secure passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. This landmark legislation secured for all U.S. citizens the right

to register and vote. The Alabama Historical Commission is working with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the National Park Service to develop a plan to protect the rural character along the historic march route. The trail is an All American Road, a National Scenic Byway and a National Historic Trail.



# 2009 WORK PLAN FOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS

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The annual work plan for our federal programs is below. These activities are designed to assist the state in meeting goals and objectives for historic preservation. Comments on these activities are welcome. To comment on the plan contact:

**Mary Shell**  
**AHC**  
**P. O. Box 300900**  
**Montgomery AL 36130-0900**  
**(334) 230-2691**  
**mary.shell@preserveala.org**

## **OUTREACH**

Maintain and update web site content; produce and distribute bimonthly Preservation Report newsletter and the Advocate. Develop and promote preservation awareness in general and specialized media through workshops, publications, presentations, events, audience development, heritage area development, and historic markers. Assist preservation partners in development of the annual 2009 statewide preservation conference, collaborative statewide funding plan, and Black Heritage Council Forum. Continue delivering leadership and board training to local nonprofit boards. Assist with technical assistance through workshops, publications, and web-based information.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Make presentations to the public on the environmental review program and Section 106 requirements. Attend meetings with project contacts to assist with review and compliance issues. Make site visits to assess National Register eligibility, consult on mitigation measures and to address rehabilitation issues. Review Phase I archaeology reports, Phase II archaeology reports, and Phase III reports. Review development projects for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Respond to inquiries on environmental review projects by mail, phone and e-mail. Conduct biweekly Section 106 meetings to coordinate review and maintenance of projects. Prepare memorandums of agreement and programmatic agreements. Maintain database to track projects.

## **PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Provide presentations to public and public officials on general significance of archaeological sites. Respond to requests for information on archaeological projects.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAM**

Provide National Register information at workshops. Enter data into NR Access Database. Submit nominations to state review board and forward to National Park Service. Prepare public notices and NR certificates. Respond to inquiries on the NR program. Hold three NR review board meetings. Review NR nominations. Review Preliminary Information Forms on historic properties. Review draft and final Alabama Register nominations. Make site visits to assess eligibility. Present nominations to staff review board and prepare certificates.

## **REHABILITATION TAX INCENTIVES PROGRAM**

Respond to requests for general information on tax incentives program. Make public presentations on program and distribute information. Communicate with active tax credit project contacts and make site visits to review potential and active projects. Review applications and forward to National Park Service.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES SURVEY PROGRAMS & HISTORIC CEMETERIES**

Make site visits in response to public concerns and provide consultations on archaeological resources and survey efforts from state and contracted projects. Respond to requests for information on the architectural survey program. Make site visits to assess architectural survey issues. Seek opportunities to digitize architectural survey data and provide in a public and web-accessible format. Monitor architectural survey grants and perform in house structure surveys. Provide for public involvement with architectural survey projects. Maintain paper files in accessible and useful format. Make site visits to assess cemetery preservation issues and/or conduct cemetery

surveys. Hold workshops on cemetery preservation, maintenance, and legal issues. Maintain cemetery register program. Process cemetery survey forms and cemetery historical marker applications completed by public. Respond to requests for information.

## **MAIN STREET PROGRAM**

Manage contract with National Trust for Historic Preservation to review statewide program needs and recommend organizational and funding structures necessary to reestablish the program. Continue meetings and communications with statewide Main Street stakeholders interested in assisting with reorganizing the program. Respond to requests for information from interested communities. Support existing programs with educational opportunities and communications. Review and comment on plans and specifications for projects in Main Street project area.

## **CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM**

Make site visits to provide technical assistance, training and grant assistance to participating CLG programs. Provide information on CLG program and grants to interested communities through phone, e-mail and packets. Make site visits to interested communities committed to the process. Review CLG applications from communities applying to the program. Review annual reports from CLGs and recommend recertification or decertification. Conduct annual CLG training workshop. Develop certification requirements for local historic preservation commissioners and distribute for comments. Manage CLG grant program to insure projects are in accordance with federal program standards. Provide regular e news to CLG contacts. Attend state planning workshops.

## **EASEMENT PROGRAM**

Provide information on historic preservation easements to the public. Assist property owners with developing preservation easements. Review development proposals on properties with easements.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON PRESERVATION/ CONSERVATION ISSUES**

Assist the public with technical preservation and design issues for historic properties. Respond to requests for information. Make site visits to provide assistance.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY SUPERVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES**

Review contract reports on resources at AHC sites. Participate in master planning and field archaeology at AHC sites. Coordinate maritime council activities.

## **STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNING**

Distribute approved plan to statewide constituents and by request. Provide plan on agency web site. Make presentations at regional meetings to planning and community development groups to reach new audiences and educate constituents on the statewide goals and objectives.

## **PRESERVATION TRUST FUND MANAGEMENT**

Continue to monitor active trust fund grant projects. Review and approve products.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMPONENT IN MAJOR STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES**

Participate with Alabama Communities of Excellence community assessments and programs to coordinate preservation objectives with statewide community development initiatives. Participate in regular state scenic byways council meetings and assessment of proposed state byways to adequately address cultural resources. Participate with Your Town Alabama workshops and meetings to educate local activists on preservation tools and programs.





# 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



Visitors view the 1961 Freedom Rides exhibit at Montgomery's Greyhound Bus Station during the May 24<sup>th</sup> unveiling.



First Lady Patsy Riley (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) and AHC director Frank White (far right) celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the camellia as Alabama's state flower by placing a marker at the Capitol.



Costumed interpreters educate visitors at the Fort Toulouse/ Fort Jackson Frontier Days. The five-day annual event welcomed crowds in excess of 10,000 people in 2008.

**Helping Alabamians protect, preserve, use, and interpret our historic buildings and archaeological sites. In Fiscal Year 2008, the Alabama Historical Commission:**

Attracted **171,985** visits to our Web site.

Welcomed **316,995** visitors to our historic sites to learn and experience our history at the very places it was made.

Responded to requests for information and assistance in understanding, protecting, and interpreting Alabama's historic and prehistoric treasures. The number of constituents and public served was **12,750**.

Reached **5,100** people with two periodical publications.

Garnered **901** media stories on AHC programs, events, historic sites, and staff members.

Organized, sponsored, cosponsored or presented at lectures, conferences, workshops, public presentations, hearings, or special programs at our own historic sites, reaching **13,525 people** with information, learning opportunities, or celebratory events.

The number of properties on Preservation Watch List expanded to a total of **496** sites facing a threat. Responded to **144** requests for assistance.

Increased the total number of properties protected by easements to **84**.

Secured **\$172,000** in national funding for AHC-owned historic sites.

Added **117** historic buildings, sites, and structures to the Alabama Inventory.

Listed **12** entries in the National Register of Historic Places, a nationwide listing of America's places worth preserving.

Assisted owners of **9** properties qualify for **federal rehabilitation tax credits**, resulting in **over \$7.6 million in private investment** in Alabama's historic places.

Provided guidance and assistance to **23** cities with historic preservation ordinances protecting over **12,139** historic houses, schools, community buildings, commercial buildings and places of worship.

Reviewed **13** permits for actions that affect cemeteries.

Reviewed **1,225** federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects for impacts on historic resources, clearing **413** of them on first review.

Engaged **1,108 volunteers** in **17,390 hours** of assistance at AHC historic sites.

**Partnered** with nonprofits, universities, cities, and government agencies to further our mission and achieve collaborative goals.





DEADLINE FOR  
NOMINATIONS IS Feb. 16

Is there an irreplaceable historic building or site in your area that is highly threatened by demolition or neglect? This is your opportunity to help save it! *Places in Peril*, a joint program of the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation, recognizes Alabama's most endangered historic resources. Each submission is to be evaluated for its significance and threat.

Please provide clear photographs of the site. Nominations will not be considered without at least one visual representation.



Mail to: Melanie Betz, Alabama Historical Commission  
P. O. Box 300900, Montgomery, AL 36130-0900

PLACES IN PERIL PROPERTY INFORMATION

Property Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip Code/ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Built: \_\_\_\_\_

Ownership: ☐ Public ☐ Private  
Designation: ☐ National Register ☐ State / Local Designation

AHC Meetings

2009 Commission meetings:  
May 6, August 5, November 4  
NRHP: Feb. 19, June 11, Oct. 22  
Alabama Register: May 28, Sept. 24

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of other local contacts/nonprofit organizations:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

On a separate page, briefly answer the following questions:

Why is the site significant? Is it architecturally significant? Historically significant? Contributes to a district? What makes it unique or different? What is the history of the site? Provide a brief (1-3 lines) historical summary. Why is the site threatened? For example, is it poor maintenance, improper development, proposed demolition, lack of funding? How imminent is the threat? Who are the property owners and what is their attitude towards the property? Provide their contact information. How well known is the site? Is it private or open to the public?

PRESERVATION REPORT

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The AHC apologizes for any address errors.  
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